

- Work

Any work made by Pantani-Surace is about things otherwise invisible. They call these their art pieces; Lia and Giovanni say 'the works', 'a work', expressing a pathway made of commitment, experimentations, hand-made tests, effort and pride for outcomes. Their perception then contrasts what observers feel – a bewilderment of vertigo watching the formalization of the impalpable, unmentionable fears, discovered fragilities, irrational desires and states of mind so intimately profound to have a root shared by all people on earth. Otherwise, without this presence triggered by their work, without open passage given by their artform, such experiences would remain silent, unexpressed and yet persistent in the emotional and sometimes in the sensorial memory of every one of us. Pantani-Surace's work – here 'work' is the process, the making of, not the result - creates an inventory of exceptions amid all things lost, among those feelings and those combinations of circumstances that can be recognizable only in art.

The path leading to these outcomes is characterized, as said, by a special care for materials and their possibilities, sometimes tested even beyond the usual limits; this path is based on a keen attention to spaces (and their stories) in which their projects are supposed to take place. Rejecting the usual concept of "site-specific" and its implications, Pantani-Surace's aesthetics contains a rigorous specificity, especially with respect to their norm, to their approach to each work, from definition of context up to its realization. With the variety of materials, its flexibility compared to the medium and the heteroclit morphology of the results Lia and Giovanni establish a strictly coherent code that meticulously concerns the way their projects are conceived and developed – an architecture of method eventually revealed in their finished work as a recognizable poetic trait.

- Time

None of Pantani-Surace's works have a purely objective quality: there is always an action that expands its interval of existence, projecting it beyond and even backwards, before the moment of their public presentation. At times this extension of their work – its dynamic happening – is played by the artists themselves. Lia and Giovanni digging, polishing, jumping, manipulating to create the form they designed and whose appearance implicitly includes this movement. Often action is demanded by the audience, asked to walk among thousands of ceramic confetti or challenged to throw each other a bouquet along a taut rope. But the dominant character that describes this ontology of action is a psychological condition. It comes from the encounter between their work, even when static, and the presence of its observer. For Pantani-Surace the core of this relationship between art and the world is an interpretation of time, according to the meaning time has at the origin of contemporary art.

Indeed, at the beginning of last century, it was neither the object nor the body that characterized the passage of art in the universe we define contemporary: it was the introduction of time, that made filmic creations possible, that is implied in performance and, above all, itself became a medium and a subject of art, something shaping the work and becoming perceptible through it. In this awareness of time lies the center of Pantani-Surace's research, and it manifests itself continuously in their works. There is a peak point in their pieces in which the contemplation of time becomes dense, almost plastic, through its visible effects (such as the real or apparent melting of a chandelier's glass drops, or a ceiling that changes its color), as well as in the intangible pieces (smells of a meal consumed repeated a few days later, sounds transmitted by the intercoms of houses in a Tuscany village). Other artworks investigate the simultaneous time of events taking place in two different spots, which makes impossible ascertaining its coincidence and its correlation (it is what happens when the score reached by an unaware player on a pinball lights up the words of a gigantic declaration of love exhibited in a public space).

All these elements reach a very high degree of synthesis in those works where voluntary acts merge with the unpredictability of mutations: a text appearing on a white wall, gradually becoming more and more dark and legible, changing color, expanding and fraying its contours. The letters emerge on the plaster because of a hidden hydraulic system that feeds the molds and produces alterations in the chemical composition of materials. In this simple mechanism (which includes the care of the work to be kept alive by watering) there is a meditation on time: that of the life of the work itself, that which the work shares with its authors, that concerning the reason and the role of the spectator.

- Picture

In the theory of the whole history of art the picture is a constant objective element. In Pantani-Surace's research, images undergo an articulated criticism of perception. In the genealogy of their artworks the picture is evanescent, unstable, subject to dispersion or even completely absent, as the work is able to express itself in sounds and smells. The physical specificity of some works, as said, risks to be destroyed (i.e. the terracotta confetti or the bouquet). In other works, the way the work appears is independent of the control of the artists and the observers, as it happens in the series of mirrors. In some mirror pieces, paradoxically, incidental stains provide stability to traces of fingerprints, to things that ordinarily are supposed to be removed; instead, here they are chemically imprinted to remain, while the image of the viewer, reflected in the mirror, disappears.

Such impermanence outlines a further specificity, tied to other constant factors in Pantani-Surace's research. The instability of pictures, the difficulty to reduce them to vitrified presence, is part of the inclination artists have for time and for its effects. If we expand over centuries the stay in front of a picture, we can easily observe that contemplation of a thing is parallel to its dissipation: with time anything disappears. Conversely, in the limited human experience, in the relationship we engage with artworks, we don't perceive the dissipation of the picture but of time. Just like time goes away in our life, in every job, action, thought. In Pantani-Surace's research the loss of pictures is redeemed by the persistence of form, as an idea, as a condition of the artwork released by any physical constriction. In this equilibrium we find a sense and consolation of art close to the human condition, even beyond the borders of perceivable time, gathered in the inventory of invisible things.